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ABSTRACT

This self-help booklet explores a wide variety of ways to enrich or expand one's life through activities and ideas to increase self-insight, sensitivity to others, awareness of the world, and enjoyment of life. The first of two major sections, Realms to Explore, includes such topics as "Know Thyself: Experiencing Your Mind and Body," "Exploring the Major Fields of Knowledge," "Learning How to Help Others to a Better Life," "Deepening Personal Relationships," "Focusing on Religious and Spiritual Growth," and "Getting Enjoyment, Fun, and Happiness Out of Life." Along with each topic are suggested activities and self-study ideas. The second section, Getting Started, has two major topics. "A Personal Inventory--Taking Stock of Your Present, Past, and Future" suggests ways to look at one's lifestyle as a whole--values, apprehensions, hopes, and dreams. The exercises suggest ways to do this. "Choosing to Change" provides a chart for use in choosing and planning personal changes. (PV)

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EXPAND YOUR LIFE

A Pocket Book for Personal Change

ALLEN TOUGH

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Without the enthusiasm of Carol Aslanian, associate director of the Future Directions for a Learning Society project, beginning the moment she first heard of the manuscript over coffee in 1978, it might never have been published. The additions and editing provided by Ronald Gross have produced a much livelier and more useful version. Finally, this book owes much to Marsha Ullman for her good ideas and careful supervision during the final stages of its preparation.

We've got the things we dreamed of when we were kids growing up – and more. Sure, we've had our share of problems – but basically the marriage is fine, the kids are growing up healthy and interesting, our jobs are rewarding . . . . The only thing is, this feeling keeps coming over one or the other of us: "Is this *all* . . .?"

– A DETROIT COUPLE

I would like to put in a good word for the thrill of learning something new *after* 45 . . . . When undertaken in the right spirit, such activities have nothing to do with dilettantism. The point is to defeat the entropy that says slow down, give it up, watch TV, and to open up another pathway that can enliven all the senses, including the sense that one is not just an old dog.

– GAIL SHEEHY, in *Passages*

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to explore a wide variety of ways to enrich or expand your life. All of us find ourselves, from time to time, too comfortably habituated to a limited range of activities and interests. We get so used to our lives, our concerns, our friends, our communities, that we hardly see them. Yet the culture in which we live offers an enormous choice of possibilities to expand our lives. Sadly, most people, most of the time, pass up the majority of these opportunities merely because they have never become aware of them.

This book is your invitation to make full use of the opportunities readily available today to make your life richer and more rewarding. It has been designed to be in itself an enjoyable adventure in self-discovery, an adventure in which you will be likely to find one or more ideas that are just right for you at this point in your life.

Unlike most self-help books, this one does not promise to teach you some single important secret or technique you should use to achieve happiness. In fact, every reader of these pages comes out with a completely different, personal benefit. Among some 300 people who have used these exercises in a pilot edition over the past seven years, here are some representative outcomes:

- ☐ Fred S., a salesman, remembered that he had been strongly attracted to photography as a teenager, and decided to borrow a camera to see whether he wanted to take it up again as a relaxing hobby.

- ☐ Alma G., a secretary, decided that an experience with a weekend encounter group might be a good start on overcoming her problems in relating warmly to new people.

- ☐ Hal B., a 56-year-old lawyer, began a regular exercise program because

he felt somewhat out of touch with his body and wanted to take firmer command of his fitness.

- Clement D., a retired police officer, had 20 vigorous work years ahead of him. The results of self-assessment exercises led him to realize that his talents and interests were in bringing discordant families into harmony, so he began formal training toward a master's degree in clinical social work.

- On one of Jane G.'s solitary nature walks, she met Charlie examining trees for rot. She learned from him that a local nature reserve was looking for volunteers and would train her in nature lore. Her work there has led to a continuing association that she considers one of her most rewarding activities.

- Lorna D. wrote a letter to the editor of a local newspaper about clean water. As a result, a study group in the next town invited her to speak at their meeting, and she soon found herself surrounded by friends who had the same interests as she and were actively pursuing them.

Is this Book for You?

Only you can decide, of course. If the kinds of initiatives described here appeal to you, it may well be that you, too, would benefit. It is certainly worth a try if you find that you are vaguely dissatisfied with your life despite the absence of weighty problems.

Do you ever find yourself thinking:

"There must be more to life than I am experiencing."

"I would like to start moving in new directions, but I am not sure which way to go."

"I feel in a rut—that my present activities are narrow and superficial."

"I seem to have time on my hands—or spend too much time on shallow, trivial activities."

"I really would like to enlarge my life, expand into new areas."

"I am usually very busy, but all my activities do not seem to add up to much."

"I just wish the next few months would be somehow different and more exciting than the last few."

"Because of a major life-change I have a fresh chance to try some new things, but it has been so long since I got in touch with what I really like and want to do."

"I seem to think well, but have forgotten how to feel."

"My feelings function well, but I seem never to have learned how to think."

This book will not teach you how to satisfy basic material needs – it does not tell you how to put food on your table or a roof over your head. It does not teach you to be your own best friend or how to influence others. It will not substitute for a psychologist's guidance if you are very troubled, or for a doctor's care if your energy problem is due to a physical imbalance.

But it may help you rekindle lagging energy and focus it on new, exciting pursuits. It will encourage you to drop one or two of your current activities that are routine or superficial in order to find time for activities that interest you more. It will help you translate some of your lifelong goals and untried dreams into concrete activities that can be pursued in the immediate future.

If you select broadly among the exercises, you will find appropriate activities that will increase your self-insight, your sensitivity to others, your awareness of the world, and your enjoyment of your life. And if you discover some activities that stimulate and delight you as you have never before been delighted and stimulated, you may even find out what you want to do with the rest of your life.

How to Use this Book

- Have fun. Accept the invitation to learn not as a chore, but for its delights and rewards.

- Be selective! Pick thoughtfully and remember that all the suggestions are not meant for everybody, so do not feel you must do it all. Choose one or two activities and ignore others for at least a month. Then choose modestly again.

- Keep an open mind. Some suggestions may sound strange or bizarre on first reading. Try to imagine yourself actually in that situation and consider what the benefit might be before rejecting it altogether.

- Plan for today, this week, this month. Personal planning is most effective if it concentrates on the next step.

- Jot down resolutions, decisions, and thoughts as you read. Underline and mark passages you want to reread. (You might find it useful to date your comments or notes.)

- Ask yourself these questions: What would I lose by trying it? Why not try it now?

- Listen to your answers. It may be that later is better. Get started on things that are not hard to do now.

- Make time. Go away for a weekend or carve out an afternoon free from interruptions.

- Ask questions. When talking to another person or having an internal

dialogue with yourself, demand concrete examples and avoid abstract statements.

- Sample different parts of the book. Nobody will fault you for skipping to the parts that most interest you.

REALMS TO EXPLORE

Know Thyself: Experiencing Your Mind and Body

"Know thyself" is one of the oldest maxims in Western culture. To try to know oneself is still the most rewarding, and difficult, way to grow.

Why should we spend time to improve in self-knowledge when the process can be painful, upsetting, discouraging, and full of unpleasant surprises? Because the more self-understanding we have, the better able we are to make important decisions – and even to make the little decisions that go into planning each day. The more we are in touch with what is inside us and what we need physically, the happier, healthier, and more relaxed we will be. Activities and goals will then be chosen because they fit us, not to impress someone else.

Most of us are remarkably unaware of our physical and psychological states. We are often only half aware of what we are experiencing at any moment, and we often imagine problems that impede us from enjoying our activities. Since early childhood, we have squelched and repressed much of our inner life. As a result, we find ourselves unable to account for strong feelings, tense muscles, lack of energy, illness, anxiety, irrational behavior, self-disgust, and unsatisfying relationships.

By monitoring our behavior patterns and body states and by taking the time to find out and deal with some of the causes of tensions, frustrations, or disappointments, we can prevent the build-up of destructive feelings and a sense of impotence. Energy and the strength to pursue positive goals will be generated by more healthful practices and the resolution of angers.

- ☐ Ellen K., a housewife, discovered that by setting aside a regular time for relaxing, she could better tolerate frustration, pain, and loud music. She also reported she could make decisions better.

- ☐ Peter G. found in his encounter group experience that although some

of the memories that "flooded" him were uncomfortable and painful, he felt relieved and much more energetic after he had cried.

☐ Adam D. tried the exercise of writing down just what he was feeling. "I wrote, 'I feel anxious.' When I began to eat, I realized the feeling was gone. All of a sudden, I knew I had been confusing anxiety with hunger. I began to write when I felt anxious and ate only limited portions at mealtime. I lost 20 pounds with ease after that insight."

☐ Corrine has taken 20 minutes each day to write. She has learned about herself and her family by writing her thoughts each day and finds she has a "fantastic" reservoir of energy after she has finished at her desk.

These exercises and suggestions will start you off by offering some techniques for getting in touch with your feelings and your physical state. With practice, certain techniques can provide you with an increasingly deep experience, new insights, and better physical and mental health.

Activities for Self-Study

- Focus your attention occasionally on what you are experiencing at the moment. Pause with your eyes closed, and try to notice what is going on inside you—your feelings, breathing, bodily sensations, swirling thoughts, hopes and wishes, and problems. Write down how you feel, what you hear, what you see.

- Read about others. Increase your self-insight by reading biographies and novels about other people. Books by Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Clark Moustakas, and other humanistic psychologists have helped others to understand their strengths, motivations, and psychological growth more clearly.

- Learn about nutrition. Choose better foods and try balanced meals. Eliminate useless and harmful foods and drinks. Reduce your intake of fat and cholesterol.

- Gain insight into yourself by getting to know others better. If possible, try living with a family in their home—choose a family with a very different cultural style. Invite someone with a very different background from yours to join you in your home. Compare notes.

- Read about and attend a variety of human potential workshops. Become acquainted with the techniques and practices of Gestalt therapy, psychosynthesis, guided fantasy, Transactional Analysis, meditation, bioenergetics, Sufi stories, Arica training, and primal therapy. (A list of growth centers is available from the Association for Humanistic Psychology, 325 Ninth Street, San Francisco, California 94103. Catalogs of programs from two pioneering centers may be obtained by writing NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, 1501 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1000, Arlington, Virginia 22209, and Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California 93920.)

- Speak to people who have been participants in such groups. Learn from them what they gained, what their insights and impressions were.

- Set aside an hour for quiet reflection alone. Walk or sit quietly, perhaps surrounded by natural scenery, and pay attention to the thoughts and feelings that arise. These inner feelings may become clearer if you try to express them by moving spontaneously or by making any noise. Or try to clear some time to spend a silent day alone, not communicating with anyone else; this helps some persons become calmer and sort out their busy, confused lives.

- Note your sensual reactions. You may be able to learn more from your normal daily experiences. At times, for example, you could try to notice how different fabrics and surfaces feel to touch, detect interesting smells as you move from one location to another, or discover any patches of beauty near you.

- Arrange to get a closer relationship with the elements—go boating on a sea-going vessel small enough for you to feel the impact of the sea and weather; go deep-sea diving; try mountain climbing, skiing, backpacking, canoeing on a fast river, or flying in a small aircraft; or walk in a storm, spend time near the ocean, grow your own vegetables.

- Rather than running away from the encounter, spend time with a person who is grieving or dying. Allow them to talk about their feelings. Allow yours to emerge.

- Join a child in play. Exchange jokes and stories. Spend a day at school. Allow yourself to remember your childhood joys and fears.

- Go back to the town in which you spent your childhood. Walk the streets.

Visit your old house or apartment. Allow your memory to wander back to those days.

- Try to "get through" a headache or toothache without a painkilling drug. If you are inclined to take a tranquilizer to help you handle a difficult situation, experiment instead with not taking it, and focus on your discomfort rather than anaesthetizing it. Write down how you feel.

- Attend a life-planning group or workshop designed to help you examine your goals, progress, and future potential. Find a counselor who can administer and interpret various tests of your interests, aptitudes, work habits, attitudes, and personality characteristics. (Contact a local YMCA, a local center for human relations training or management development, your acquaintances, or check the Yellow Pages of your telephone directory for leads.)

- Join a men's or women's consciousness-raising group.

- Experience a variety of films, poetry, art, religious theories, scientific research and theory. Keep a record of what excites and stimulates you, what leaves you indifferent.

- When alone at home some time, try moving freely or dancing spontaneously to music. In this way, you may get in touch with feelings and conflicts that are usually just below the conscious level. You might even try flinging off your clothing one piece at a time, as Laura Huxley suggests in her book, *You Are Not the Target* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1963): identify each piece as a particular burden or restriction or negative feeling that you are removing from yourself.

- If you feel angry and hostile, hitting a punching bag or pillow (or hitting a bed or couch with a tennis racket) with all the vehemence you feel and shouting as loudly as you want to can help you identify various sources of that feeling.

- Try therapy. Even a few months of work with a supportive therapist can lead to breakthrough insights that can start you on the exciting search for self-awareness and give you the strength you need to pursue your goals.

- Keep a daily journal or diary. Jot down your thoughts, feelings, salient events, and worries at the end of each day.

- Eliminate some bad habit that harms your body such as alcohol, cigarettes, dangerous drugs, useless sweets, late nights, dangerous practices or sports, too much food, sudden spurts of strenuous activity followed by inaction. Techniques to change bad habits range from self-hypnosis to behavior modification, from professional counseling to feedback graphs, from therapy groups to self-help books.

- Work on a better-looking you. Make an effort to spend time caring for your skin or your hair, improving your posture, or building a more fit body and better muscle tone through exercise.

- Focus on general relaxation techniques or bring "nonvoluntary" bodily systems under conscious control with visceral learning. Biofeedback is one technique for bringing muscle tension and relaxation under "conscious" control.

- Improve your physical stamina. Learn the techniques for jogging, swimming, biking, or tennis, or build exercise into your daily routine, walking up several flights of stairs or walking the last mile to your office.

- Develop your aerobic capacity through regular exercise. For example, follow Dr. Kenneth Cooper's program from his book, *The Aerobic Way* (M. Evans, 1977).

To "know thyself" better, you might read some of the books described here:

Fascinating exercises for gaining self-insight are outlined by John Stevens in *Awareness* (Real People Press, 1971) and by Sidney Simon in *Meeting Yourself Halfway* (Argus Communications, 1974). Remembering and studying your dreams is one particular path to self-insight: Ann Faraday's *Dream Game* (Harper & Row, 1974) gives various approaches. Writing a daily journal is another effective path: Christina Baldwin tells how in *One to One* (M. Evans, 1977).

Women beginning to sort out their goals in life could use *How To Decide: A Guide for Women* by Nelle Tumlin Scholz and others (College Entrance Examination Board, 1975).

Fresh approaches to understanding your body and maintaining robust health are provided by Mike Samuels and Hal Bennett in *The Well Body Book* (Random House, 1973) and by Keith Sehnert in *How to Be Your Own Doctor (Sometimes)* (Grosset & Dunlap, 1975).

Additional exercises and activities can be found in this book under "A Personal Inventory" (page 35).

Exploring the Major Fields of Knowledge

The most familiar way to expand our horizons, for most of us, is pursuit of knowledge and understanding through the liberal arts and the natural and social sciences. Today our ideas of what's worth knowing have broadened to include the other areas covered in this book, but the major fields of scholarship still provide absorbing long-range interests that can make you a more profound person.

Here are the kinds of benefits reported by individuals who have pursued one of the traditional areas of learning:

- ☐ Ruth W.'s volunteer work with prisoners at a local detention facility caught her up in two studies—one focused on literary style, the other on the reasons for crime. "I haven't yet settled either what makes powerful writing or what makes a person act outside the law, but I think I'm getting closer to answers all the time. In sharing my excitement with the people I teach, I think I've provided to them the model of someone learning because they care. Most of the women have never seen anyone intense about learning, and they are catching my fever."

- ☐ Cornelius H. says that one of the great pleasures of his life is his continual exploration of history and philosophy through his reading of classics in these fields. Just by reading on the subway to and from work each day, he asserts, "you can go to your own university, acquire as much sensitivity and understanding in the arts and sciences as your abilities and leisure permit, learn something of history and literature, and fix the course of your hearing, listening and seeing, once and for all, in a general way, exactly as you would if you matriculated at college."

- ☐ Norman M., a retired lawyer, had a narrower interest: contemporary

reconsiderations of Darwin's theory of evolution. His reading of several widely available paperbacks led him to the conclusion that "Darwinism was going to pieces, that there was no struggle for existence, and that the scholars no longer talked about the survival of the fittest." He wrote an essay on his conclusions which, published as a brief book, won plaudits from experts in the field.

- ☐ Janet B. became preoccupied with the relationship between criminals and their victims after her brother was killed by a mugger. Her investigation of the field led her to experts, field research, and wide reading in sociology and law, resulting in an understanding of the subject about which she now teaches and writes.

- ☐ Lloyd M., a businessman, became intrigued by the new discipline of "psychohistory" 15 years ago. But no university had a program he could take. So he pursued his studies in psychology and history on his own, in his spare time, and today, still as an avocation, coordinates an institute and journal in the field, both of which he founded.

- ☐ Some years ago, Don G. discovered general semantics, a subject combining parts of linguistics, psychology, and philosophy. He has studied it since then by obtaining a series of the lecture films of S. I. Hayakawa and tape cassettes of other experts on the discipline, attending meetings of a local group of enthusiasts, and reading journals in the field.

To get an overview of the realms of organized knowledge, consider the following listing of some significant fields, each of which has an obvious bearing on our daily lives. Of course, such an inventory of the length and breadth of human understanding contains much more than any one person could tackle. Each category could fill years of study. The point is to realize the wealth from which you can choose, and to start modestly to sample one subject or another that especially appeals to you at this point in your mental development.

What You Might Focus On

Economics: The world of business and industry; economic policy; the world of work and how your own occupation fits into the broader society; finance and credit; international development.

Environment: The natural environment; weather; agriculture; ecology; wildlife; geography; pollution; natural resources and energy.

Justice: Laws; police and courts; crime and delinquency; political repression.

International Affairs: Causes and patterns of war – effects of escalation and weapons races; the views of hawks and doves; how a war affects families; refugees; realistic routes to peace. Population growth – poverty; third world; scarcity and distribution of the world's resources; consumption by affluent nations; patterns of economic development in contrasting countries.

Social Issues: The major problems of our society today; how governments react to them; major decision making; the future of society; how leaders foresee and cope with major societal problems.

Contemporary Organizations: Their growth and decline; organizational development and renewal; the impact of large corporations and governments on their employees and the public.

Biography: Lives of great and interesting individuals working in familiar fields and those working in fields new to you – people in other countries and their ways of life.

Anthropology: Lifestyles and living conditions within a 10-mile radius of your home or work; learn or imagine what it's like to be someone else (such as a poor farmer in India, a corporation president in New York City, a student in Japan, a Chicago ghetto resident, a politician, a professional athlete).

Evolution and History: The evolution and breakdown of civilizations; current trends and broad changes in society; the long-term future of life on earth; the life of the individual in the year 2000.

Philosophy: Why we exist; philosophy of life; your own place in the universe; basic aims in life; religious truth; ethics; philosophy; the vital practices of various religions.

Science: Its history and future; scientific methods; recent advances in the physical and biological sciences.

Human Sexuality: Female/male relationships; sex research; sex-role patterns; socialization of children for their roles in various cultures.

Psychic Phenomena: Parapsychology; UFOs; mysticism.

Architecture, Design, Art, Music, Dance, Poetry, Drama: How they develop and reflect the times. In addition to learning about one of these areas, you might want to learn – or go back to – painting or drawing, a musical instrument, singing or dancing, writing, or acting.

Some Methods for Learning on Your Own

Here are some ways of learning about major fields of knowledge. Again, the purpose of this list is to stimulate and expand your thinking, so you can make better choices.

- Your local librarian can suggest good beginning books in subjects you'd like to sample, or you might enjoy just browsing in the shelves devoted to that subject. Taking an hour or two each month to just explore different subject areas in the library can be a stimulating exercise in exposing yourself to new areas. You can do the same thing by purposely varying your television viewing to sample documentaries or specials in fields you might find interesting.

- Courses, conferences, workshops or discussion groups can be useful, and most cities now have an information center or a directory. You also can learn about the offerings available from a special supplement which appears in many newspapers in late August and again in January. A packaged experience such as a course or group is good as an introduction to a new field in which you feel uneasy. After initial exposure, you will probably want to focus on your own on the part of the subject which interests you most.

- Correspondence courses offer opportunities to study virtually any academic subject, including some fairly esoteric ones. Major colleges and universities offer these courses, as do commercial organizations (usually in more technical or vocational fields). You can get an omnibus catalog, *Guide to Independent Study Through Correspondence Instruction*, detailing who offers what from the National University Extension Association, Suite 360, 1 Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C. 20036, for $3.25 including postage.

- Tape cassettes by world-renowned experts on most major subjects and special interests are available. At present, there is no cumulative catalog, but most large libraries now have a supply of sample tapes, and some of the main producers' catalogs. Cassettes enable you to bring the best teachers into your life at your beck and call: You can listen to them while soaking in the tub, mixing the vichyssoise, fixing the bike, or driving to work.

- Simulation games are a fast-growing industry, because they provide a way of learning that is quite different from reading. Through active in-

volvement you learn the vocabulary, ways of thinking, and processes involved in whatever field is being simulated, from medieval or nuclear warfare, to computers or sports. Large cities often have a store featuring a wide selection of such games.

- The professional journals are often the fastest and most enjoyable way to plunge right into a field, just to get a sense of what the frontier work in it is like. You won't understand everything, of course, but you will become aware of the tone, language, problems, and methods of the field.

- Activist or educational organizations exist today in virtually every area, from international politics to environment to model railroading. If you're a person who likes to learn from other people, joining and participating in such an organization can be an enjoyable way of picking up a new field virtually by osmosis. You might find a suitable group by asking friends or a librarian, checking the telephone book, and browsing through the magazine section of a well-stocked bookstore.

- Some communities are now served by "learning networks"—people-matching bureaus with which you can register your interest in learning or teaching some subject, and through which you can meet others who want to learn from you, or from whom you might want to learn. If there isn't one in your community, you might consider starting one. Information about this attractive social invention is available in *The Learning Exchange: What It Is, How It Works,* which may be purchased from The Learning Exchange, P.O. Box 920, Evanston, Illinois 60204.

To find still more techniques to explore some major fields of knowledge on your own, you might read these books:

College on Your Own by Gail Thain Parker and Gene R. Hawes (Bantam, 1978), contains outlines of courses in 20 fields, each with reading lists of books selected by college teachers.

Cornelius Hirschberg's out-of-print book, *The Priceless Gift* (Simon & Schuster, 1960), which you may find in the library, is one man's successful program for reading widely and deeply in some of the most basic humanistic and scientific subjects. Another mentor in this field is the self-taught longshoreman, Eric Hoffer, whose *Working and Thinking on the Waterfront* (Harper & Row, 1969) reveals how daily experience, reading, and the determination to make sense of the world can give rise to understanding.

The Lifelong Learner by Ronald Gross (Simon & Schuster, 1977) portrays numerous people who have pursued serious study on their own.

In addition to specific cases and an exploration of each person's potential for wide-ranging learning, there is a guide to available resources and methods.

For those interested in planning and carrying through their own college-level education outside of all colleges and universities, a helpful section on self-guided independent study is provided by John Coyne and Tom Hebert in *This Way Out* (Dutton, 1972).

A broad picture of how and why people conduct major learning efforts, on their own or with an instructor, is provided in my book, *The Adult's Learning Projects* (Learning Concepts, 1979).

For a booklet containing further information for prospective students, see *Tips on Home Study Schools*, which can be obtained from the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., 1150 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. For a list of accredited private correspondence schools, write the National Home Study Council, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. Another good source for information on home study is the Independent Study Program, Cultural Education Center, Room 5D45, Albany, New York 12230.

Deepening Personal Relationships

The arts of friendship, intimacy, and love have often been considered gifts which some people have and others lack. But in the last decade or so, this field has been explored by psychologists who have developed new understanding. One can now actually learn principles and techniques for improving the range and quality of one's personal relationships.

☐ Bernice T., a 20-year-old, admits she found some of the T-group loosening-up exercises enormously helpful at big parties. "I'd sit in corners along with other wallflowers, feeling sorry for myself and counting the minutes. But then I realized that my fellow sufferers were probably as anxious as I to be saved, so I took it upon myself to bring them out. I generally find two basic approaches helpful: talking about how I'm feeling, and about how they seem to be feeling about being there. I've learned to describe my emotions and say what I see about the other person, and it breaks the ice."

☐ Charlie F., who joined a men's consciousness-raising group as a joke when his wife went to NOW meetings, says, "I know it must sound dumb to have been threatened, but I was. So I thought I'd get even. What really happened is that I realized for the first time that I was unused to talking about emotions. I learned to ask personal questions and to answer them. It helped me at home with my kids and wife, and at the office, too, although there I get less of a chance to use it. I'm not so afraid now to talk about my fears and hopes. Behind all the 'man talk,' other men also feel lonely, and fear impotence and the loss of power. We all want nurturing and I've the strength to admit it now."

☐ Fred C., a 65-year-old corporation chairman, told us, "When I had to

ask everyone in the room to do something for me I thought I'd never make it. All my life I wanted to be independent. I never asked anyone anything – not if I could handle it myself. And anything I couldn't handle myself I didn't want. Now that I'm beginning to admit I have needs I find that others warm to me. I must have seemed like some marble statue or superman to my friends and family. But I think they genuinely like me better as a warm-blooded, occasionally fragile human being. It's too bad I had to almost crack up to learn this, but I'm sure glad I learned before I was too old."

- ☐ Carla M. found herself always giving in to requests and often not following through on them. Making a list of things she liked to do and those she especially disliked, she found that the things she hated doing rarely got done, but that she felt constantly guilty about having failed her friends. Carla practiced three ways to say "no" nicely, and began using them appropriately. "As a result, I got a good deal more done, had time for myself, and I liked my friends and relatives more. I wasn't angry any longer."

- ☐ May S. read somewhere that one should complain *once only* and as soon after an offending incident as possible. Experimenting with this in her own home, she found she had to bite her tongue in the beginning but that her children smiled a lot more. When she felt comfortable with the once-and-no-more complaint rule, she tried another experiment. "I mentioned a good thing the person did, even when I had a complaint. Now I rarely complain about the same type of behavior twice. My family hears me better when I say something good at the same time as I'm scolding, and I remember how much I value them, if I train myself to think about something they've done that's good."

Activities for More Satisfying Relationships

- List three things about a loved one (parent, mate, child, lover) that you dislike. Role-play the person and tell why you do these things. Can you understand? Can you think of ways to make the person feel more comfortable so they could avoid the behavior that pains you?

- Think of a behavior of yours that others have complained about, or ask them if they would tell you one thing that bothers them. Don't defend yourself. Take time alone to examine why you do that. List the people

you blame for "forcing" you to do such things. List your feelings about yourself. Which list is longer?

- Think of a behavior of your own that others have praised. Take time alone to examine *why* you do it. List your feelings about yourself when you think of it.

- Tell each person to whom you want to be closer something you really like about them that you've never mentioned before. Watch their behavior.

- Show some physical affection for someone you live with or work with whom you seldom touch. It can be a special smile exchanged between you.

- For one day, watch a friend or relative closely. Could they be lonely, scared, in need of affection? Go slowly and try to open up an avenue for the feeling to be expressed. Allow time for the other person to think. Speak of your own deep feelings.

- In an argument, try to take the side of the other person as you listen. Ask that person if you are expressing correctly what he or she is finding upsetting before you answer.

- Tell your child, spouse, or lover about a unique quality he or she has that you admire. Be very explicit as to why you find it admirable. Describe the last time you noticed how special it was.

- Write down three ways in which you manage to make your child, spouse, lover, or friend feel guilty toward you. Try not to use these ways for one week.

- Try to get through this weekend without asking anyone to bring or serve you something. Instead, offer to serve those around you. Note their reactions. Do not ask for praise.

- Ask each person you live with to make a list of all the chores that have to be done in the house. Ask them to write next to each chore, the name of the person who does the chore. Who does more than his or her fair share of things? Present your group or family with your findings and compare your list with theirs. Try to find a way to equalize the burden.

- Next time you are about to criticize, scold, or yell at a "loved" one, try to consider whether your yelling will have a positive or negative effect. Try to find a way to describe what you would like clearly, leaving out what happened last week, or yesterday.

- Next time your child, lover, or friend tells you something, try to keep your responses to a minimum. Do not interrupt or add your opinion until she/he is completely finished talking.

- Record an hour's interaction with a person you live with and listen to it two days later. Try to listen as an anthropologist would to what each of you is not saying about your assumptions as well as what each of you *is* saying.

To learn more about how to enrich your personal relationships, you might read the following books:

Methods for being assertive in certain relationships, without putting down the other person or yourself, are given by Robert Alberti and Michael Emmons in *Your Perfect Right* (Impact, 1974). Suggestions for dealing with various aspects of human relationships are given at the end of each chapter in Martin Shepard's *Do-It-Yourself Psychotherapy Book* (Random House, 1973). Even more encyclopedic is the *Psychology Today Omnibook of Personal Development* by Katinka Matson (Morrow, 1977), containing descriptions of an incredible array of available methods and paths.

Efforts to become free of sex-role stereotyping in both attitude and behavior are highlighted by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* (Dell, 1977); and Warren Farrell in *The Liberated Man* (Random House, 1974).

An effective approach to communication between parents and children, emphasizing authentic expression and active listening, is presented by Thomas Gordon in *Parent Effectiveness Training* (Wyden, 1970).

Persons concerned with emotional problems in themselves or others may want to consult *You Are Not Alone: Understanding and Dealing with Mental Illness* (Little, Brown, 1976), a guide by Clare Clairborne Park and Leon Shapiro.

Learning How to Help Others to a Better Life

Years ago, a British movie entitled *I'm Alright, Jack* succinctly expressed the popular if rarely articulated notion: "As long as I've got mine, your problems or needs don't concern me."

But many people are not satisfied to leave well enough alone and live the *I'm Alright, Jack* life. These people look for ways to promote brotherhood, peace, understanding, and even love between people. They frequently seek to mitigate inequities, to improve the distribution of power, wealth, justice, natural resources, and liberty. They are not paralyzed by the feeling that the system is too big, the action too slight, the odds too great.

- ☐ Helen B. was 40 when she became interested in helping young people in her area who were "kicked out of school" for minor infractions. "I began as a lay advisor, learning enough to tell them their rights. Soon I found I could do more for people if I volunteered to work out of the Civil Liberties Union. After a couple of years they offered me a modest salary. I found it so fascinating I began law school. By the time I went I knew how to do research. I took the bar exam last year and today this 53-year-old 'housewife' is a lawyer. Not bad!"

- ☐ Jack S. says, "I spoke up a lot at meetings because I was unhappy with the state of the building my assistant lived in. I'm a simple man, I run a small flower shop. But the building was deteriorating something terrible. It seemed natural to try to force the landlord to make improvements so that Jim wouldn't have colds all the time, and the baby wouldn't eat plaster. So one thing led to another, and I began to pass around petitions and get the community excited about it, and the landlord finally got threatened with a fine he couldn't ignore. The building's gotten fixed

and now they've asked me to help them get better day care facilities . . . ."

- ☐ Judy W. recalls, "When my baby died of crib death, I was devastated, and I can't tell you what the police interrogation did to add to the horror of the experience. Here was an unexplained death which made me feel unbearably sad and frightened for my two boys, and on top of it, I felt I was being treated like a murderer. So I started an organization to help other parents and to raise funds to research the problem. The doctors now think it may be a virus that's responsible . . . ."

- ☐ Melvin T. says, "I can't find a way to devote a lot of time to others. My button factory keeps me busy all day and I like to paint in my spare time. What with a little jogging and time for the family, I find the only contribution I can make is by selecting 15 charities a year to give to, and figuring about 7 percent of my gross income is my limit. I divvy up the money, half to political pressure groups that work for a cleaner environment, a quarter to groups that push for equal opportunity, and a quarter to hospitals and health research."

- ☐ Peter D. became aware of drug use by young people in his community. "My kids were grown up and I hadn't had anything to do with young people for a while, but when I realized that they were using drugs the way my father used to drink, to withdraw from personal problems, I decided I could help. I began working with a couple of parents in the community who admitted they were scared and didn't know what to do. Word got out and soon a group of concerned parents tapped know-how from around the country, and together we pressured the schools and community to provide year-round counseling services to frightened kids. Now I'm working with the high school kids who are providing playground supervision to grade school children."

Suggested Activities
for Helping Others Effectively

- Keep a file of newspaper stories that point out problems in your community, the society, or the environment that you would like to see solved. Call on your librarian for help in locating organizations that lobby or work in other ways to publicize issues or to change government policies. Get material from the organizations and consider working for them,

starting a local pressure group. You can find out how to help an organization attain its ends by writing the chairperson and asking what you can do. Or, if you have some ideas, make a proposal of what you think should be done next and address it to the chairperson. You might find yourself in charge of a project if they think your idea is good.

- Spend a part of any trip abroad learning how other countries solve social problems. It will enrich your trip, you will meet some exciting people, and you will come back with ideas and material to write, speak, and act on.

- Learn to use the media for your causes by reading a simple book on publicity and developing a campaign. If you want to extend your influence, use pictures in addition to writing letters – you might also write to national television commentators, to the local educational television station, and to the editors of newsletters of appropriate organizations.

- Talk *to* people, don't talk at them or about them. Often the people who are engaged in a struggle have never been really listened to. Not only can you learn from them what it's like to be crippled, poor, blind, young, old, etc., but you can, by supportive responses, give them the feedback they need to take action on their own behalf.

- Check at your library for a listing of local community service agencies, with their addresses and telephone numbers, and description of what each agency is designed to do. On the basis of what you learn, write to several that sound important. Mention your interest in getting involved; mention your skills, talents, and experience; and ask if they would like to speak with you about your volunteering or working with them for a salary.

- Think about offering some services to an agency or group that has *not* yet provided the service, but would benefit from its addition. The first person who dreamed up reading to the blind or to paralyzed patients did just that. Perhaps a program primarily designed to teach new skills to women would benefit from some child care backup, or a teenage facility might welcome someone who can teach young people to read music, to sew, to write job résumés or letters, or to be an ombudsman when they get into trouble at school.

- Keep your eyes open. Often opportunities you have are denied to groups who have not had the power or the imagination to lobby for them. Lately,

disabled people, for example, have begun to demand equal access to public theaters and schools. There are many people who need some special service to partake of advantages offered the majority, but often those people have accepted their second-place citizenship. You can help if you see a way they could be served by adjusting the design or scheduling of the service. Call around and find out whom you can contact or who is in charge, and keep others informed of your work through letters to the newspaper.

- Live your convictions. If you are concerned about how we are damaging the environment, cut back on your own use of packaged goods, plastic bottles, heavy cars, or paper goods. Use less and recycle more. If you feel people are alienated, that a sense of community is disappearing, organize a block association or a "hotline"; call the infirm, stay with someone who is grieving. People are in need all around you: If you are sensitive and careful not to be intrusive, but rather follow their leads, you will find you can involve yourself in the lives of others without embarrassing them.

- Set aside a reasonable portion of your time as well as your income for altruistic causes. If you are working with children in a hospital, for example, spending some money in outfitting them for a play or making a nonbirthday party will do a lot for their spirits and also will enrich your experience. You might also find that you can become quite expert at getting donations from local or national businesses. For example, publishers often give books free to hospitals, schools (for fund raising), and prisons. Don't buy before you try.

- Learn about ways others have found to protect the environment, make bridges between countries, develop self-reliance among poor people—and then begin to practice and teach those skills to others. Your contribution as a concerned individual might be more productive than that of a professional. Don't assume you need credentials to be helpful.

For further ways to learn how to help others you might read Laile Bartlett's *New Work/New Life* (Harper & Row, 1976), in which he tells about people "who got hooked on making the System work for everyone [and] made the age-old discovery that fulfilling others brings fulfillment for oneself."

If you're interested in possible careers for social change, look at *The New Professionals*, edited by Ronald Gross and Paul Osterman (Simon & Schuster, 1972), a collection of essays by individuals who chose paths

in such diverse fields as journalism, teaching, science, the ministry, business, and engineering.

A good handbook for public interest projects has been developed by the Ralph Nader organization, *A Public Citizen's Action Manual*, by Donald K. Ross (Viking, 1973). The major organizations in each field usually can provide materials for projects, for example, *Ecotactics: The Sierra Club Handbook for Environment Activists*, edited by John G. Mitchell with Constance L. Stallings (Pocket Books, 1970).

Focusing on Religious and Spiritual Growth

Human beings have a deep-rooted need for meaning in their lives. For many this basic need is best met by religious, spiritual, or so-called transcendent experiences. Experiencing and learning more about a reality that transcends your everyday life can be sustaining, joyous, and fulfilling.

The choices available to you in this area are wide indeed. Over the past decade virtually every major kind of spiritual experience – including several newly devised in response to our contemporary needs – have come to be offered in this country. Each of them is a path which has proved rewarding for large numbers of people. Learning about those that sound most congenial, and pursuing in depth one or two that seem just right for you, can add a critical dimension to your life.

- ☐ Doris L., a librarian in her forties, was leading an active life but felt that something essential was missing. A friend mentioned Sufi camp and gave Doris an article on the Sufi "way," which led her to her initial encounters with this Eastern sect. "It seemed to speak to just what I had always felt about life," Doris said. Her experiences led to a redirection of her professional life toward using her information-processing skills to advance this movement.

- ☐ During adolescence, Gene M. had become involved with political action and found little in his Jewish temple to interest him. Years later, when he was attending the Bar Mitzvah service of a friend's son, he was startled by the resonance of the message of the rabbi. "I found the words of the sermon articulated much of my own philosophy, and began to study seriously the moral aspects of my religion. These had escaped me as a child, but seemed to inform so many of my actions when I reflected on my past life."

☐ Amanda T. had grown up in a nonreligious household and never thought much about the spiritual aspect of life. "But I always loved Christmas mass, because of the ritual and the sense of community I experienced when attending church with friends. Finally, I realized that I could participate in the experience actively—I joined a local church choir, as an accompanist. My participation in the music of the mass is for me a constant joy, and I find that I get from the music a heightened awareness I experience at no other time."

☐ In a campus church in his city, Stan R. found a group of happy energetic people who met to study the Bible, experience the Holy Spirit, and discuss appropriate ways of helping other people. The effects of this weekly group now pervade his everyday life: He sees his life and purpose more clearly, and spends more time in altruistic activities.

☐ James M. first experienced a merging with the earth and indeed with the whole universe while sitting quietly beside a mountain lake. All boundaries between himself and the world just seemed to melt away, and James has felt a close bond to the natural world and to other people ever since.

Suggested Activities for Religious and Spiritual Growth

- Join a suitable group in a church or synagogue, perhaps a Bible study group, a prayer group, a group that emphasizes experiencing God or the Holy Spirit, or a group that seeks religious growth serving others.

- Join a choir that sings sacred scores or set aside time for singing, chanting, or moving freely along with a fine record at home.

- Attend a particularly moving religious service, such as a candlelight carol service during the Christmas season, or simply reflect quietly in a cathedral or church or synagogue when there is no special service.

- Experience a bond with the universe or with all humankind through intense closeness with one person, or a small group, communicating just with your eyes or hands (no words), through leisurely physical closeness, or through deeper and deeper conversation.

- Read about: your own religion; other religions; God; mystical practices and experiences common to many cultures and centuries; cosmic con-

sciousness; the life and beliefs of a saintly person; life after death; reincarnation; astral travel; or the spirit world.

- Seek out a meditation group or instructor, a religious group or service different from the ones with which you are familiar, or a yoga class that emphasizes inner growth.

- Sit quietly beside the ocean, or in the mountains, or beside a majestic river or wilderness lake.

- Permit yourself to experience your psychic sensitivity – gaining information through ESP, for instance – and to discuss it with someone who accepts you.

- Form a group to work through the consciousness-expanding experiences presented by Robert Masters and Jean Houston in *Mind Games* (Viking, 1972).

For more paths to enlightenment you might read some of the following books:

A stimulating variety of possible paths and techniques are suggested by C. William Henderson in *Awakening: Ways to Psychospiritual Growth* (Prentice-Hall, 1975), by the *Spiritual Community Guide* (Spiritual Community Publications, 1978), by Edward Rosenfeld in *The Book of Highs: 250 Ways to Alter Consciousness without Drugs* (Quandrangle/New York Times, 1973), and by Lawrence LeShan in *How to Meditate* (Little, Brown, 1974).

Countless books on particular religious paths and phenomena are described and assessed by Cris Popenoe in *Inner Development* (Random House, 1979) and its later supplements available from the Yes! Bookstore in Washington, D.C.

In *Alternate Realities* (Evans, 1976), Lawrence LeShan describes four broad types of reality and claims that each of us must be at home in all four types in order to avoid stunted growth. Abraham Maslow wrote widely about peak experiences, and then captured the best of his thinking in "Theory Z" in *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (Viking, 1971).

For the person who has already read widely and now seeks a more integrative book, Stanislav Grof presents an all-encompassing framework in *Realms of the Human Unconscious* (Viking, 1975), and Claudio Naranjo presents another comprehensive approach, including education and therapy along with religion, in *The One Quest* (Wildwood, 1974).

Getting Enjoyment, Fun, and Happiness Out of Life

Some people have a knack for choosing appropriate recreational activities, travel and vacation plans, and other enjoyable aspects of life. Such people have discovered the activities that make them joyful, refreshed, whole again, happy. They are also able to detect just when they need such an activity and are ready for it.

Others are blocked from greater happiness by some misconception or habit. For example, some believe that setting aside time primarily for your own pleasure is selfish and, therefore, not acceptable or legitimate. A few feel that all their activities should be oriented to the future, and that it is not appropriate to seek immediate enjoyment. Others believe one cannot achieve happiness by seeking it directly, but must instead achieve it by some indirect means. Some simply feel too busy to find time for enjoyable activities or feel overwhelmed and burdened by unfinished tasks. It has been so long since some busy executives and professional people have experienced strong authentic joy that they have come to believe that a restaurant meal or golf game is the greatest pleasure available to them.

- ☐ William U. came home from work each day and sat down in front of the TV set. Watching television was a simple way for him to relax and forget the day. But he began to realize that his life was revolving around programming, that he was living vicariously instead of living his life for himself. At a friend's persuasion, he signed up for a photography class at the local high school. His interest was captured, and he found his time filled with taking and developing photographs, books and magazines on photography, and exciting photographic expeditions.

- ☐ Nancy B. spent 14 hours a day working and still felt as though she was not accomplishing a thing. She worked at the office, on the train, and

during her lunch breaks. The first thing she thought of when she woke up was the day's work. When she stole time away from work for the occasional weekend to spend with her family, she felt guilty. Finally, when the pressure become too great, she was forced to decide to make time for herself instead of letting her work consume all her time and energies. With a counselor's help, she reorganized the priorities of her life. She found that she could get just as much work done in a 35-hour week and still have time to spend with her family and to pursue her creative writing hobby. She was able to relax and do what she wanted to do.

- ☐ Alice B., age 65, was a recent widow. The grief she felt at her husband's death was soon transformed into self-pity. At the request of a local senior citizen group, she joined a group of volunteers who organized visits to the children's ward in the hospital. After a week of seeing the children's eyes light up when their new "grandmother" entered their room, the self-pity was gone and her life took on a new meaning.

- ☐ Susan S. and her husband, Ted, found themselves alone for the first time in 20 years. Their oldest son was married and their youngest daughter had started her freshman year at college. The evenings were silent as they found themselves staring blankly at each other, not knowing what to do or say. Tracing back to the years when they were first married, they remembered the long walks they used to take, enjoying the beauty of woods and fields. They joined a hiking club, took trips alone or with others, and found new friends through their newly revived interest.

How about you? Are you getting as much enjoyment, fun, and happiness out of life as you want to? Or do you want to *alter* activities and expenditures designed to give you pleasure? For example, do you want to drop some activities that do not really give you much pleasure (though *other* people may find them enjoyable)? Or you may want to consider some new activities that could give you even greater pleasure than your current ones.

Suggested Activities for Getting Enjoyment Out of Life

- Set aside some specific time for yourself. Consider the time your own, to do as you wish. During that period of time, forget about unfinished tasks or responsibilities.

- Make a list of what you want to gain from your leisure time. Whether it be physical fitness, fun with family or friends, refreshment, enjoyment, or relaxation, choose activities which will help you meet these goals.

- Organize the priorities of your life. In order to have more time for enjoyment, eliminate the activities that contribute little to your life.

- Consider learning a new sport or craft. Learning is half the fun of it, so if you don't enjoy learning it, you've chosen the wrong activity.

- Look into continuing education classes at your local high school and college. They offer a world of ideas – from Chinese, gourmet cooking, leaded glass to dancercise or Tai Chuan Do. Also, many public libraries and museums sponsor lectures and/or educational films. Check the local paper.

- Join an organization – health club, golf club, yacht club, the "Y." You'll meet new people and be introduced to new activities.

- Inquire at local shops about classes they may offer. For example, a camera shop may offer photography lessons or instructions on developing film; a crafts shop could give knitting or needlepoint lessons.

- Look at magazines, arts and leisure guides, local papers for what is happening in your area.

- If music is your passion, join a church or community choir, take private lessons, attend music appreciation classes, or go to concerts or the opera.

- Learn a new game – backgammon, chess, bridge, Othello. Invite your friends over for a night of friendly competition.

- Begin a unique collection – art, books, stamps, antiques. You may find yourself studying, repairing, restoring, selling, or buying your specialty.

- Explore a new place. Experience the excitement of wondering what you will discover next. Select a place or environment that provides novelty, solitude, freedom from tension or anxiety, or whatever you seek and need.

- Convert your reading interests into active interests. Look at the reading

material in your house. If the books and magazines you read deal with the sea, why not take up sailing, or scuba diving, or whale watching. If your local environment does not permit this, attend lectures, visit exhibits, watch for documentary programs on television, correspond with experts in the field, begin a collection, go to museums.

- Turn a home chore into a hobby – an activity you look forward to rather than dread. Turn ordinary lawn work into gardening. Instead of buying new furniture, make your own or finish unpainted furniture. You'll take pride in your efforts.

- Volunteer your time and special talents. Lots of organizations could use you. Look around your area. Hospitals, scouting groups, community agencies, senior citizen groups are good places to start.

- With your spouse, child, or close friend develop mutual or complementary interests to pursue together.

- Plan a family outing or picnic. Go to the zoo or the park. Make it a family affair and enjoy each other's company.

- Take that sport you watch on television and become more than a spectator. Whether it is baseball, basketball, or hockey, do more than observe the players. Next time your team is playing, go to the stadium and see the action in person. Read about the game and its history. If you are full of vitality, play the game yourself. Perhaps there are teams in your neighborhood that you could join.

- Next time you are walking somewhere, or even driving, notice the sky, trees, gardens, and other glimpses of nature that you pass.

- Let more music come into your life – listen, play, maybe even compose a song.

- Walk for sheer pleasure in some interesting part of town.

You might find it useful and enjoyable to browse in a bookstore or public library. You will be amazed at the wide range of enjoyable activities that are covered in books: sports, music, travel, nature, volunteering, crafts, hobbies, walking, people, gardening, restaurants, and countless others.

If you go to a library or bookstore you might also find a useful

catalog of possible activities: one good example is *The Great Escape: A Sourcebook of Delights and Pleasures for the Mind and Body*, edited by Min S. Yee and Donald K. Wright (Bantam, 1974). If you want help in thinking through and getting exactly what you want from your vacations, you might like *Time Off: A Psychological Guide to Vacations* by Stephen Shapiro and Alan Tuckerman (Anchor/Doubleday, 1978).

You might also seek leisure counseling – a process combining career guidance with advice on how to get more from your leisure time. One such source is Constructive Leisure in Los Angeles. It was the first private consulting center in the country specializing in leisure counseling and offers individual and group leisure counseling, school and college lectures and courses, speeches, consulting services, and leisure counseling materials, books, and tapes. One excellent cassette tape is entitled "How to Get the Most Happiness from Your Leisure." This and other related materials can be obtained by writing directly to Constructive Leisure, 511 North La Cienega Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90048.

Additional interesting reading can be found in the Leisure Information Newsletter. Published four times a year, it gives information on current thoughts, events, and materials pertaining to leisure. To request a subscription or receive further information, write The Leisure Institute, 127 West 96th Street, New York, New York 10028.

GETTING STARTED

A Personal Inventory — Taking Stock of Your Present, Past, and Future

You can dip into any of the areas described in the preceding sections, and derive immediate pleasure and reward from the experience — and I hope you already have. But now you also may want to take a look at your lifestyle as a whole — your values, apprehensions, hopes, and dreams. This section suggests some ways to do that. These exercises are more structured, rational and purposive than those offered in the section "Know Thyself." Here you are invited to go beyond new experiences to do some of the most exciting thinking any person can undertake: examining your own life and shaping your own future. Plato said that "the unexamined life is not worth living."

You will not do every exercise, of course. There are too many, and some of them overlap. As you browse through the various sections, however, you may find that two or three of the exercises strike you as particularly useful and interesting.

Your Past Life

- Look back over your life, especially the past 10 years. Select two or three periods during which you were especially happy or when your life seemed to be especially full and good, or when everything seemed to be just right, or when you felt you were at your best or living especially effectively. Try to figure out what made that period so great. List components that make it stand out so positively.

- List specific activities, experiences, and episodes that have produced in you great happiness, satisfaction, or joy. What are the peak moments that made you feel fully alert, glad to be alive? What made these moments so enjoyable and memorable?

- What physical and human environments have you found most comfortable or suitable?

- What do you consider especially worthy and important that you have done?

- Draw a roadmap of your total life from birth to death. Mark key events and transitions. Mark where you are at present, and note how much time is left. Include alternative futures if you wish. Your end product can be as simple or elaborate as you like, ranging from a single horizontal line to a huge multicolored diagram.

The Present

- Some especially important aspects of your present self are your strengths, skills, areas of knowledge and competence, undeveloped capacities and potentialities, abilities. What do you do well? At what activity do you usually succeed? What do other persons gain from you? List what you do well. Perhaps with the help of a family member or close friend, you can see your positive side much more accurately.

- List a few major weaknesses.

- Record or estimate the number of hours per week that you spend at various tasks. For example, how much time do you spend at (a) helping the members of your family; (b) contributing to the welfare or happiness of others; (c) all additional activities necessary for retaining your job; (d) maintaining or improving your health, home, car, garden, appearance; (e) learning, reading, expanding; (f) enjoying yourself; (g) planning your day or week; (h) various other benefits or outcomes that you seek. Are you surprised by where your time goes? Are there any gaps in your list, things you would like to be doing but cannot find the time for? Do you have any goals not reflected in your activities?

- Perform a similar exercise (as in the previous paragraph) with your *financial* expenditures. Are some of them out of line with your goals, providing little or no significant benefits to you or anyone else? Do you have other goals that are not reflected much in your actual spending?

- Think of various relatives, acquaintances, and co-workers. What goals

do they have? Which of these do you share, and what goals do you *not* have?

- What are your major purposes in life, your strongest personal objectives, or your most important life goals? What do you want most from life?
- How well are things going for you these days? Are you satisfied with your life, or do you want to improve it?
- What do you want out of life that you are not getting now? What major changes or additions do you want to make in your life? What bothers you about your life?
- Ignoring money and other temporary restrictions, what would you like to do more than anything else?
- Are you finding time for the truly important things you want to do?
- What knowledge, understanding, insight, competence, or other changes in yourself do you want?
- Do you feel love, interest, and empathy toward others or are you basically preoccupied with yourself?
- How much do you contribute to the happiness of others, and to building a better world?
- To what extent does your actual life match your basic values?
- When are you closest to behaving as you really want to behave?
- Record a variety of answers to the question, "Who am I?" Either jot down the answers or talk nonstop into a tape recorder for three minutes.
- What really matters to you, and what do you care about most? You can simply jot down your answers, but you can also notice what gets your attention when your mind is free to roam. You can notice, too, any items that arouse a great deal of psychological energy or turmoil in your mind.
- What music or poems do you find especially moving or relevant? Reflect on why.

- Most people vastly underrate their own learning and change efforts. Take about three minutes to jot down anything you have been trying to learn during the past few months—and any other changes you have been achieving. After completing your list, some surprises or interesting patterns may emerge as you reflect on it.

- Use three columns to list the activities and situations that you especially enjoy and prefer, those that are medium or neutral, and those you dislike.

Half-Hidden Hopes for the Future

For 20 or 30 minutes, try to let your imagination soar. Think about what you would really like to do or be in the next few years. Don't let restrictions, misconceptions, modesty, fears, or habit limit you. Really take off into the blue sky in your thinking. If the world let you do anything at all, if you could do or achieve whatever you wish, what would you want? What are those hidden hopes and dreams that you hardly dare admit even to yourself? What would you like to do, what *could* you perhaps do, that would be really great—really exciting or fulfilling or satisfying or joyful for you? What untapped potentials do you have or could you develop? What strengths or powers do you have that could be developed or used even better than they are now?

After you have finished making your list, reflect on each item. What actions should you take on each goal, hope, dream, or wish? Which are not sufficiently important to bother pursuing, or would not be worth the effort? Are there some that you cannot do anything about? Perhaps you simply have to abandon the goal as too difficult and unlikely, or else just let external circumstances determine whether it will happen or not.

After finishing that comprehensive exercise, you may want to try one or two of the following, which are more specific. After each exercise that you try, select the most significant insights that you gained. In particular, think of the implications for your life in the immediate future. What steps should you take, what knowledge and skill should you acquire, in order to move toward a better future? At the same time, be on the lookout for dreams and motivations that actually influence your actions or create dissatisfaction but are peripheral or trivial, impossible to achieve, or not worth the cost.

These exercises are not designed to focus your whole life on some

remote future goal. Fears, hopes, plans, and striving directed toward the distant future can interfere with present living and being. The exercises simply try to help you detect and clarify those dreams and hopes that are already subconsciously affecting your behavior. In short, you will see some alternative futures for yourself. As the next step, you may work out some plan or project that will provide a link to your desired future. The object is to move from your remote long-term goals to concrete, practical, immediate actions.

- Who are your heroes or models? That is, whom do you want to be like, in certain ways?

- If you suddenly had one day a week free for whatever you want, what would you do with the days?

- Suppose that you have suddenly been guaranteed a good income for the next four months, even if you do not work. You have also been given $9,000 cash, and your friends are so pleased with your good luck that they have offered to take over all your responsibilities and obligations. Let your imagination soar. Being free to do whatever you wish, what would you actually do during the next four months?

- Set aside half an hour when you will not be interrupted. Have a notebook or tape recorder so you can capture your thoughts. Relax. Then start to develop a fantasy or daydream about your ideal future. Move 10 years into the future. How old will you be? Where will you be living? What will your family and friends be like? Imagine how you will feel and think. If things have gone the way you want them to, what will you ideally have achieved? What sort of person will you be? What will be your most enjoyable experiences? In your imagination, slowly live through an ideal day or week with all the rich details. Assume that you have already achieved the self-acceptance, confidence, strength, knowledge, and competence that you need.

- Now, from your vantage point 10 years in the future, look back to *this* year. Which aspects of your present life seem absurd, trivial, or unnecessary? What are the worst gaps in your present activities? What knowledge and skills do you lack? Which of your current activities and growth areas will have the largest positive influence on the future?

- Consider the alternative futures that are open to you. For example, what occupation, job, lifestyle, marital status, number of children, and per-

sonality characteristics do you see as genuine alternatives for yourself 5, 10, 20 years from now? What might be the consequences of each possibility, and which are best for you? Instead of a list, you may prefer a diagram of the various branching paths from which you can choose. Your diagram might resemble a tree with specific labels on each branch.

- Try preparing a "time and emotion forecast," as suggested in Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* (Random House, 1970) in the "Personal Stability Zones" section of Chapter 17. In the lefthand column, list the most important sectors of your life: work, maintenance, enjoyment, mate, children, parents, learning about humankind and the world, illness, or whatever. Then in two adjoining columns estimate the percentage of time and proportion of emotional energy that you now invest in each. In the next two columns do the same for one or two years from now, and in the two righthand columns do 5- and 10-year forecasts.

Thinking Far Ahead to the End of Your Future

Developing a fantasy about your own death may sound morbid, unpleasant, or sad. But facing the eventual end, of this particular life at least, is simply facing reality. Such an exercise can put your life in comprehensive perspective. It can be stimulating and useful, even enjoyable. Here are five specific exercises from which to choose.

- Suppose that tomorrow morning you discover that you have only three months to live. There is no doubt, say the doctors, that you will die in three months, though your energy and strength will be fine until then. What will you do during these three months? (You might also think about what you wish you had done before now.)

- Think ahead to when you are very old and about to die. What will you have to do between now and then to be able to face death without regret or bitterness, without wishing that you had taken certain actions or directions and avoided others? What can you do now to avoid wishing later that you could relive your life? Maybe you can do it right the first time!

- Look far ahead to the time of your death. Suppose that your life has worked out as you want it to. A close friend is presenting a fairly positive eulogy at your funeral. He or she outlines your accomplishments, your

best characteristics, the things you were noted for, your major interests and activities. Take an hour to think about what he or she says and to write it down.

- Make up a one-sentence epitaph for your tombstone.

- Imagine your own funeral, many years from now, in great detail. Who says what? How does each person really feel? Further instructions are provided in two exercises in Laura Huxley's book, *You Are Not the Target* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1963).

Choosing to Change

You may feel overwhelmed at this point. After realizing there are so many possibilities for expanding one's life, many people feel almost paralyzed. "Which ones shall I choose?" exclaimed Brenda S. "There are so many possibilities, and I like them all."

The chart on the following page can be a useful tool in choosing and planning your own changes.

- As you think of important changes that you especially want in yourself or your life, jot them down in the left hand column.

- That column can include a wide variety of changes. Some may be changes in your knowledge, skill, understanding, or insight. Others may be activities or experiences that you want to try. Still others may be changes in your personal characteristics, your body or health, your habits, or your emotions. Some may be changes in lifestyle, living arrangements, surroundings, or job. Others may be basic new dimensions or directions – fresh areas of expansion and growth.

- Reorganize and rewrite your list occasionally, using fresh sheets if necessary. You might sometimes even start afresh before looking at your previous list.

- On a separate sheet, you might want to list any thoughts or obstacles that immediately come to mind for certain items, and that might make you shy away from those items. Before rejecting such items, figure out and jot down various ways you could overcome or reduce the problem.

- In the righthand column, list specific actions you might take as the first step or two toward each change.

What major changes do I want in myself or my life?	*To move toward each change, what steps could I take?*

- Eventually, for immediate action, select just one or two changes from the first column and/or one or two steps from the second column. Don't strive for too many changes all at once. Don't frustrate yourself by trying to set off in three or four new directions at one time. Instead, pick just one or two for now. In a few months you can consider additional possibilities.

You have enormous potential for changing your life and yourself. Most of us are quite capable of steering and guiding our own changes. We can achieve far more change than we usually give ourselves credit for. It is fairly common for people to attain some important change or goal, and then to promptly forget just how effectively and successfully they did so. Each of us can at times be very powerful and capable in originating and achieving change. It's not necessary to always be a pawn, a powerless person pulled this way and that by circumstances and by other people.

At this point, you may find yourself hesitant to choose one change or another. Perhaps there are one or two changes on your list that you very strongly want – they'd be enormously beneficial to your happiness or growth or relationships – but something holds you back.

As you think about that change, ask yourself, "Why not? What's the most that can happen?" Sometimes that is all you need to do. You may discover that all your vague fears can be countered once they are faced.

Or, you could jot down all the reasons for not changing, and then analyze each reason in turn. Is it an absolutely impassable roadblock, or is there some way to get around it? Are there ways to reduce or overcome each problem?

If the problem is lack of time or money, you might consider ways of reorganizing your priorities. Ask yourself, "Why wait?" Or try some of the suggestions that Alan Lakein gives in *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life* (Wyden, 1973). For example, he suggests that you divide your goals and activities into three categories designated A, B, and C. Then let some of the "C" activities go, and put aside more time for the "A" items.

If you feel restricted by other people or by circumstances, you might find certain books helpful in encouraging you to break free. Nena and George O'Neill wrote *Shifting Gears* (M. Evans, 1974) to help people choose and achieve their changes with courage and skill. Harry Browne's book, *How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World* (Macmillan, 1973), provides a powerful push to escape from your restrictions in order to get or do what you want. Some people adopt this as their favorite guidebook,

and gain a great deal of strength and assertiveness from it; others hate the book and call it dangerous.

Once you have chosen a change, the next step is to begin implementing it. Try some small move in the right direction, even if you cannot see far enough ahead to be certain just how everything will work out. "One step at a time." Then notice how you feel after these early efforts. Does this feel like the right direction after all, or should you now drop it and consider some other change instead?

One final suggestion: Learn to accept cheerfully most aspects of yourself and your life. Find as much satisfaction and joy as you can in your present relationships and work and home. Probably only about 10 percent of your total inner and outer life will change during the near future, and 90 percent will remain about the same. So you might as well come to celebrate the positive aspects of that 90 percent. Count the blessings you already have instead of putting all your hopes for happiness on anticipated changes.

What is FDLS?

The Future Directions for a Learning Society (FDLS) program is a major effort toward the realization of a learning society in the United States. The program focuses on improving access and transition for learners, which has been the Board's role in education for more than 75 years. By building on recent Board programs that have increasingly focused on adults, the program extends this historic role to include assistance to adult learners and to the diverse agencies, institutions, and organizations that provide learning opportunities for them.

Funded by the Exxon Education Foundation, FDLS develops consensus and support for strategies, services, and policies that can best meet current and projected needs of participants and providers in a learning society. To this end, the program solicits and relies on the participation of professional people in the field, public policymakers, and the larger community. A major purpose of the Exxon grant is to promote the mobilization of additional funds and other resources necessary for major initiatives in this developing field. The initial grant supports the project's planning and management, the identification and design of service areas, the review and analysis of public policy, and publishing of relevant materials.

The program will produce projections of future trends, information about the needs of learners and providers of educational opportunities and resources, policy recommendations, and services. The program is engaged in finding better ways to gauge the needs of learners, in identifying the problems institutions face in meeting learners' needs, in strengthening learning opportunities, and in increasing public, professional, and political understanding of the field. A chief focus of the program is to demonstrate promising new approaches and specific services.

Other Publications from Future Directions for a Learning Society

The Federal Role in Lifelong Learning Ellen Hoffman. 1980. 32 pages. (237413) $3.

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Learning Times 1979. 12 pages. (248100) $7.50 per 50 copies; available in multiples of 50. No further discounts apply.

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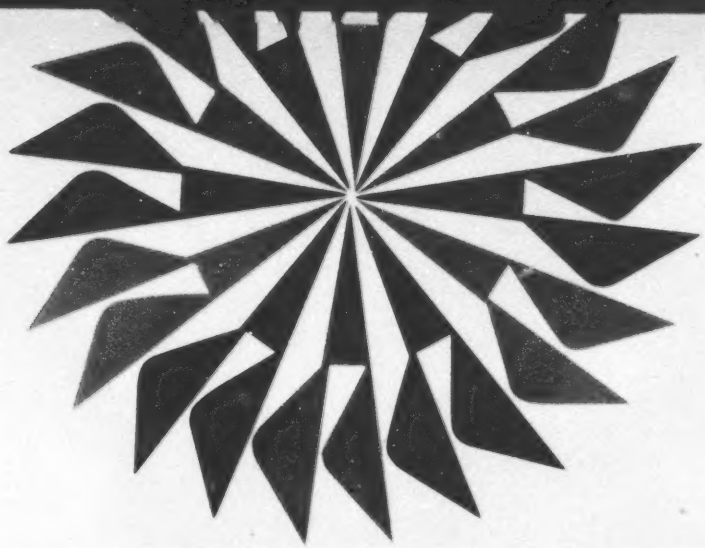

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